DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 181 318 CE 023 942

| | |
|---|---|
| AUTHOR | Herr, Edwin L. |
| TITLE | Work Focused Guidance for Youth in Transition: Some Implications for Vocational Education Research and Development. Occasional Paper No. 43 |
| INSTITUTION | Ohio State Univ., Columbus. National Center for Research in Vocational Education. |
| PUB DATE | Apr 78 |
| NOTE | 22p.: Paper presented at the National Center for Research in Vocational Education staff development seminar (Columbus, OH, April 1978). |
| AVAILABLE FROM | National Center Publications, The National Center for Research in Vocational Education, The Ohio State University, 1960 Kenny Road, Columbus, OH 43210 ($2.20) |
| EDRS PRICE | MF01/PC01 Plus Postage. |
| DESCRIPTORS | Definitions; Educational Problems; *Education Work Relationship; Federal Legislation; *Occupational Guidance; Public Policy; *Research Needs; Speeches; *Vocational Counseling |

ABSTRACT

The topic of work focused guidance for youth in transition is addressed from three broad perspectives: the notions that youth transition problems are not indigenous to the United States but are international in scope, an attempt to examine the meaning of work focused guidance, and, finally, a brief look at youth in transition. The author examines four major issues related to work focused guidance: (1) work or employment as an outcome of guidance, (2) work activity or work setting as a guidance technique, (3) the preparation of guidance personnel for work focused guidance, and (4) the meaning of work in relation to the guidance process (i.e., work as earning a living or as a means of achieving personal goals). The concepts of "occupational" or "vocational guidance" are examined in contrast to "career guidance," seen as a program rather than a service. The implications of this shift in relationship to federal employment and training legislation are discussed with focus on implications for research and development. Finally, seven questions are posed for research on services to youth in transition with emphasis on the need for attention to subpopulations. (PV)

**********
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
**********

ED181318

Occasional Paper No. 43

# WORK FOCUSED GUIDANCE FOR YOUTH IN TRANSITION: SOME IMPLICATIONS FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

by

Edwin L. Herr

Professor of Education and Head,
Division of Counseling and Educational Psychology
The Pennsylvania State University

The National Center for Research in Vocational Education
The Ohio State University
Columbus, Ohio 43210

April 1978

CE 023 942

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Joel Magisos

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

## THE NATIONAL CENTER MISSION STATEMENT

The National Center for Research in Vocational Education's mission is to increase the ability of diverse agencies, institutions, and organizations to solve educational problems relating to individual career planning, preparation, and progression. The National Center fulfills its mission by:

- Generating knowledge through research
- Developing educational programs and products
- Evaluating individual program needs and outcomes
- Installing educational programs and products
- Operating information systems and services
- Conducting leadership development and training programs

## PREFACE

In a continuing effort to keep staff informed of current developments in vocational education R&D, the National Center for Research in Vocational Education, at the Ohio State University conducts seminars led by leaders in various fields of education and related disciplines.

Dr. Edwin L. Herr, Professor of Education and Head, Division of Counseling and Educational Psychology, the Pennsylvania State University, has been invited to present a lecture entitled "Work Focused Guidance for Youth in Transition: Some Implications for Vocational Education Research and Development."

Dr. Herr defines "work focused guidance" and its role in guidance and counseling. He discusses this role as it relates to the ways in which vocational education R&D efforts can assist in the improvement of guidance and counseling services for youth and adults moving from a school setting to a work setting.

Dr. Herr began his career as a business education teacher at Carlisle Senior High School, Carlisle, Pennsylvania in 1956. Since then he has been a school counselor; Director of the Bureau of Guidance Services, State of Pennsylvania; visiting lecturer, and Interim Dean, College of Education, the Pennsylvania State University. His military career includes service in the Air National Guard, U.S. Air Force and the Air Force Reserve. He has held ranks from Airman Basic to Captain. He is a member of Kappa Delta Pi, Pi Omega Pi, Phi Delta Kappa, and is named in *An International Dictionary of Leaders in Education, Science and Government 1967* - .

Dr. Herr was on the editorial board of *The School Counselor*, and was guest editor of the *Journal of Career Education*. Two of his most recent publications are: *Career Guidance Through the Life Span: Toward Systematic Approaches* (in press) and *School and Careers* (1977).

On behalf of the National Center and the Ohio State University, we welcome Dr. Edwin L. Herr to share with us, his presentation "Work Focused Guidance for Youth in Transition: Some Implications for Vocational Education Research and Development."

Robert E. Taylor
Executive Director

## WORK FOCUSED GUIDANCE FOR YOUTH IN TRANSITION: SOME IMPLICATIONS FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

The title assigned to this presentation, "Work Focused Guidance for Youth in Transition," is an interesting one to me. The arrangement of the words in the title connotes some emphases which I would like to tilt with from a research and development perspective. Before doing so, however, I would like to reflect on the broader context into which "work focused guidance for youth in transition" fits.

First, decisions about "work focused guidance," "vocational guidance," "career guidance," or other similar terms are but subaspects of the broader problem of the relationship between education and work. This is true because guidance is itself an educative process of helping persons acquire and process relevant self and career information and act upon it. It is also true because "guidance for youth in transition" occurs primarily within educational settings or in close organizational proximity to them because these are the settings in our society where most youth are or have recently been. In addition, it is true because decisions about the nature of the relationship between education and work will be of significant influence in shaping "work focused guidance for youth in transition."

Decisions such as whether work focused guidance will be central or peripheral to education, be a by-product of instruction, have content integrity in its own right, be of importance for all youth or only some segments of the youth population, be conducted in a compartmentalized or infused fashion, be the responsibility of specialists in or out of schools or the responsibility of everyone associated with the youth—parents, teachers, counselors, administrators, community representatives—will largely be a function of how education itself is viewed.

That there is confusion about the responsibility of education for the passage of youth into work is obvious. Surely in the early 1960s and with increasing crescendo in the early 1970s, presidential speeches, federal task forces, and legislation have been directed to examining and proposing alternative ways of increasing the relationship between education and work. Changes in the Vocational Education Act from 1963 to the present, career education, YEDPA, and CETA all exemplify concerns about this matter. In large measure, however, such efforts still founder on an inability to reform educational priorities and practices in a sufficiently dramatic fashion to insure that all students across the nation are provided help with those problem areas which federal policy, at least indicates, are associated with the education to work transition:

1. Inadequate knowledge of the labor market
2. Inadequate knowledge of one's own abilities and aptitudes
3. Restricted occupational socialization

4. Ineffective assessment or certification of occupational competencies

5. Inadequate assistance to students to find work and develop job-seeking skills (Stern, 1977)

Second, a concern about "work focused guidance for youth in transition" is not a peculiarly American concern. We often act as though it were, but in fact, the matter is international in scope. Indeed, it is accurate to state that in countries of every degree of economic and industrial development and of political persuasion, there is today a striving for growth. It is defined principally in economic terms and requires an industrial base, and virtually all nations currently are interested in the development of a work force functionally adequate to the specific nation's level of and goals for industrialism. From these perspectives, nations of quite different traditions and cultures acknowledge the fundamental need for investment in human capital. It has become an accepted fact that in order to have economic growth, major investments of a nation's resources must be placed into creating job opportunities as well as into education and training, occupational or career development, and guidance processes.

To be sure, the policies governing these educational, occupational, and social responses to strivings for economic growth vary among nations. There are different balances between manpower development on the one hand and individual development on the other as motivators for mass education, industrial and economic expansion, and related issues. Some nations regard these matters in terms of social control; others, in terms of social change; and, still others, in terms of human development. In each of these circumstances, the nature of "work focused guidance" is different.

Depending upon the point at which a particular nation is on a continuum of industrial or economic development, guidance processes may be used to identify and nurture those of particular talents and skills necessary to the creation of a meritocratic elite, to distribute and match available workers among available job opportunities, to serve a gatekeeping function in terms of the number of persons permitted or encouraged to enter particular types of education and training or job opportunities, or to facilitate free and informed choice. These are not mutually exclusive guidance emphases but one or another of them is likely to predominate in any particular nation.

Third, it is useful to acknowledge that since roughly the beginning of the 1960s, concerns about underemployment and unemployment have become significant issues in nation after nation.[1] For example, Michanek (1971), a Swedish authority on international economic development, has reported that in the developing countries about 75 million workers out of a labor force of about 1 billion were unemployed at the beginning of the 1970s, that underemployment can be set in the hundreds of millions, and that it would require the creation of about 300 million new jobs during this decade just to keep the problem from getting worse. Unfortunately, with currency problems, exaggerated trade deficits because of energy expenditures, deterioration of the industrial facilities in some nations, and other economic problems since the beginning of the 1970s, the matter has gotten worse than Michanek forecast.

---

[1] (Parenthetically, it is worth observing here that these are precisely the conditions under which questions of the relationship of schooling to work or guidance to work become most insistent. Under conditions where there is labor demand, such questions rarely arise. But when many people find difficulty gaining employment in fields for which they are well prepared, education or guidance processes are likely to be seen as villains rather than reflections of broader societal problems.)

Americans know of the attention that the mass media have shown in the recent past about the plight of the "overeducated Americans," the college graduates or the Ph.Ds who have not found work or whose skills are underutilized in the work they can find. So it is in many parts of the world. Somewhat more specific to our topic today, however, is the fact that in this decade an army of unemployed youth world-wide has become a critical factor. For example, the International Labor Office (1977a) has recently reported that:

> In the nine Common Market countries those under the age of 25 looking for jobs have more than doubled since 1973 and now account for one out of every three of the 5 million unemployed . . . Teenagers are hardest hit, especially those looking for their first job. Even in countries with relatively low levels of joblessness, such as Sweden and Norway, teenage unemployment is twice or thrice higher than that of other workers.

In another ILO study (1977b), in an Asian country, it was found that 79 percent of the unemployed were under 25 years old and nearly half of them had not yet reached the age of 18. The magnitude of the unemployment problem is further dramatized by other ILO statistics (1977b) that young people under 20 make up one-third of the population of the industrialized countries and one-half in the developing countries.

What these international statistics suggest to me in a fairly random way is that international agencies and governments have become aware that the major questions regarding technology, industrial expansion, and economic productivity are not technical but human questions (Drucker, 1970). They include issues such as: how to keep educational and economic development in some kind of phase; how to both motivate and prepare youth to enter the existing occupational structure; how to share responsibility for the transition of youth from school to work between the education sector and the industrial-business-commerce sector; how to distribute sparse resources to which target groups if all cannot be equally served; and how to provide mass education and full employment within radically shifting economic conditions?

These statistics also indicate to me that work focused guidance for youth can be viewed through research and development lenses beyond those which we typically employ. In short, we need to view comparative approaches to the matter as non-parochially as possible in order to take into account responses which have been used to affect all parts of the equation: the individual in transition, preparation for work, the availability of work for youth, and transition services. Rather than treat each of these categories independently, I prefer to weave consideration of these topics throughout an examination of the elements of the title of this presentation.

## Work Focused Guidance

There are at least four issues which relate to the first three words of the title of this presentation. One has to do with work or employment as the outcome of work focused guidance. The second is using work activity or the work setting as a guidance technique. The third has to do with the preparation of counselors for work focused guidance. The fourth is the meaning of work in relation to either the content or the description of the guidance process involved.

## Work or Employment as an Outcome of Guidance

Let us turn first to work or employment as an outcome of guidance. While there are some data which suggest that exposure by youth to different sorts of guidance processes does have an impact

on such criteria as later career maturity, subsequent income, level of job held, or realism of choice, relatively little is known about the direct effects of guidance on facilitating employment or reducing unemployment. Although there is a lot of rhetoric about the importance of the relationships between guidance and employment as a rationale for guidance, little data exist to support, on unequivocal grounds, such a philosophically attractive premise. The argument typically is that by providing job readiness skills, attitudes of good planning, and information to youth, they will be prepared for work, and unemployment will be reduced. There is logic to the argument but few findings support it.

Part of the problem is that we treat unemployment as an unidimensional notion. Yet as Kroll (1976) has observed, unemployment can be described in at least four ways: structural, frictional, seasonal, and cyclical. Each of these types of unemployment is caused by different forces. If guidance processes are to be studied in relationship to them, they must be differentiated, and specific guidance approaches likely to affect each type of unemployment need to be conceived and studied. Even so, it seems appropriate to acknowledge that at the base of the content of guidance processes is the occupational, educational, personal, and social possibility structure which exists. Participation in guidance processes by youth cannot assure work for them if opportunities to work are not available or if the causes of the particular types of unemployment being experienced by persons or groups do not reside in inadequate or inappropriate education, information, or planning. Because of the nature of our economic system, reductions in unemployment are to a large degree functions of changes in the tax structure, monetary credit or supply, the flight of business and industry from central cities into the suburbs or to other regions of the country, the types of products produced, the tendency to break complex tasks into small increments amenable to low level and routine functioning, discriminatory hiring practices against young workers, work disincentives compounded by low wages, and relatively high governmental or union unemployment benefits. Do guidance theorists and practitioners have a role in effecting such changes? Would their collaboration with corporations, labor, and governmental structures to identify types of job development possible, monetarist policies which would create more jobs, and particularly those demanding the educational and skill levels of the available labor force, make any difference to the rate and characteristics of employment? Would such roles be more useful than concentrating attention on helping youth develop the skills to gain access to whatever opportunities do exist? Research on such topics does not exist.

A related issue is what kind of work should guidance processes facilitate? Should the focus be on what jobs now exist, the probable jobs of the future, how one can create jobs for oneself, or all of these? How far should guidance processes raise an individual's horizons before the exercise becomes unrealistic or unethical? While a number of studies have shown that youth and, indeed, adults continue to be committed to work, these studies also indicate that most of these persons want meaningful, satisfying, challenging, personally fulfilling work. But not all, or even most, jobs now fit such criteria. Is it a possible, or a practical goal, to make work meaningful and satisfying to every individual? Some persons have argued that moving away from the repetitive, tedious, back-breaking work of industrial assembly processes would reduce worker alienation and add significance to the work activity. However, it seems apparent that many of the white-collar jobs in the industrial sector are equally as repetitive, exhausting, and limiting (O'Toole, 1975; Grubb and Lazerson, 1975). Within this context, it is also important to note that many of the jobs now being created do not have career ladders—e.g., health paraprofessionals, x-ray technicians, teacher aides, many who have clerical positions. Persons enter them and essentially remain at the same occupational level unless they move into a totally different job set. In many instances, it is not possible to move from a paraprofessional to a professional status, or from a technician to a managerial or an administrative position.

As projected into the immediate-future, there is simply not a sufficient number of jobs which use higher order skills, training, or intelligence to accommodate the desires for challenge and self-fulfillment voiced by large proportions of youth or young workers. Does that really matter? Do people simply accommodate to such circumstances and bring their personal values for mobility, meaningfulness, and challenge into line with their reality? Is the significance of work found in work activity or in one's attitude toward work activity? If the latter, how do guidance processes treat such a notion short of indoctrination and still preserve the overriding concept of free and informed choice? The data bearing upon the point are ambivalent.

What are the implications for work focused guidance when work is not available or at least not available in the terms preferred? Is the answer to raise expectations while making sure that youth also recognize the contingencies, the competition, the potential frustration which they face in meeting their personal goals? Or would an appropriate alternative be to focus guidance processes on methods to use free time (non-work time) in ways which can be self-fulfilling? There are other related questions: What role do guidance processes have in helping youth manage their time when it is unencumbered with work expectations or deadlines? On what bases does one's personal identity rest in the absence of work reference points? How can guidance processes facilitate such personal identity?

To press the point a bit further, it is useful to acknowledge that virtually any approach to guidance has, as a major purpose, the facilitation of individual choice making. But in work focused guidance what should be the thrust of such choice-making? Should individuals be adapted to the work opportunities which are realistically open to them? If so, on what bases should definitions of realistic opportunities be made and within what sort of time frame? Or, is it more appropriate to make youth aware of the full range of opportunities and help them to be more autonomous in choosing the alternative suited to their needs and preference? This is the prevailing philosophy, but it is largely a notion unrelated to empirical test.

Does raising the choice levels of persons from a lower socioeconomic class to a middle-class perspective of the "good life" really mean to deny them their own value system? Sessions (1975) has argued that to tell young working class people there is satisfaction and dignity in that which is their probable destiny is not making it possible for them to have freedom to choose—rather, it is telling them that they should be satisfied with their lot in life. Is it likely that exposing students to a belief that any one of the literally thousands of jobs in the occupational structure is available to their choice and action will lead to an "overchoice" situation in which individuals will find it difficult to cope effectively or will have feelings of confusion, cognitive dissonance, and premature closure because of the enormity of the choice task?

### Work Activity or Work Setting as a Guidance Technique

A second issue which can be extracted from the notion of work focused guidance concerns using work activity or the work setting as a guidance technique. Indeed, some persons have argued for using work as an instrument of behavioral modification. In essence what this notion amounts to is using work itself as a motivational or mediational force by which other guidance outcomes can be achieved. For example, if we want youth to understand the interdependence of the occupational structure, to learn how to manage or organize time, to learn how to develop realistic self-appraisals of strengths and weaknesses, we typically use abstract mechanisms—discussions, films, gaming, tests—which are removed in time and format from that to which they are to be related. Except for examining vocational education for a portion of the youth

population or certain highly specific federal programs such as the Job Corps or its predecessors, or special groups such as "candy stripers," we have rarely explored the use of work as a guidance mechanism for a whole range of adolescents.

Certainly an expansion of cooperative education at the secondary school level or a period of national youth service following high school might be more clearly seen as having guidance implications than is now true. Such programs are essentially processes of behavioral change for youth through experience. At one level, experience comes from determining immediately how what has been learned in a classroom is applied at work. At another level, experience comes from being adult-oriented at the work station rather than adolescent-oriented. In this sense, youth have the opportunity to experience work norms as lived by adults rather than speculate about such things with their peers. Finally, work experience programs assist the youth to see himself or herself, his or her characteristics, and how the work is done as a whole. Frequently, classroom study fragments employability traits, work habits, human relations, and communications into small increments for purposes of learning. But in the real world, all of these elements are part of a complete and constantly unfolding fabric which requires individual judgment and discrimination if career maturity is to result.

Work experience viewed in such terms provides a potential medium for a youth to test, with the help of a guidance specialist, which career development tasks have already been incorporated into his or her behavioral repertoire and which tasks still need honing. As such, these experiences provide goal direction for further learning and planning with specific focus on maximizing employability.

Viewing work as behavioral modification, however, raises a number of R&D questions. For example, what adjustments in legislation, funding, or other types of intervention are required to create large increases in such opportunities within the current occupational structure? What economic impact would such an approach to youth guidance carry? What incentives would need to be provided to youth to have them take advantage of such opportunities? Should all youth be required to participate in such experiences as part of a competency-based approach to employability associated with high school graduation or some other certification process? What specific career development tasks would youth be expected to demonstrate as part of such experiences? How does one retain individual flexibility and autonomy while insuring certain minimum understandings of self and opportunities? How should guidance personnel be trained to function with youth within the realities of the work place?

### The Preparation of Guidance Personnel for Work Focused Guidance

The third issue we need to consider has to do with the preparation of the persons "doing" work focused guidance. The type of preparation required of counseling or other guidance personnel to deal with "work focused guidance" has been a point of considerable controversy for nearly twenty years. Each of us knows well the criticisms of employment service counselors, counselors in university mental health clinics, and school counselors. Of particular interest to our topic have been the ongoing criticisms of school counselors as either incapable of doing "work focused guidance" or of not viewing "work focused guidance" with as much priority as others believe it should receive. Vocational educators have been among the most critical of the school counselor's publics. Perhaps the best current indication of how vocational educators perceive the role of school counselors and their preparation for "work focused guidance" is that found in the Sixth Report of the National Advisory Council on Vocational Education entitled "Counseling and Guidance: A Call for Change." Among its recommendations are that:

- State departments of education require work experience outside of education for all school counselors who work with students and prospective students of vocational education.
- Individuals with rich backgrounds of experience in business, industry, and labor, but with no teaching experience, be infused into the counseling system.
- Counselor education institutions require at least one practicum devoted to an on-site study of the business-labor-industry community.
- Decision makers in education make extensive provision for the training and employment of a wide variety of paraprofessional personnel to work in guidance under supervision of professionally qualified counselors.
- Increased efforts be made to improve sound counseling and guidance services to members of minority populations and other disadvantaged persons.
- Job placement and follow-up services be considered major parts of counseling and guidance programs.
- Career development programs be considered a major component in career education, both in legislation and operating systems.

Professional counselors, who are not vocational educators, would refute several of these recommendations quite directly and would acknowledge the feasibility or logic of some other recommendations only partially. For example, the requirement of work experience outside education has been a recommendation directed to counselor preparation off and on for several decades. The questions posed to this issue by professional counselors include: Are all forms of work experience equal? How much work experience is sufficient? What are the outcomes of such work experience that you expect counselors to obtain: insight into interdependence among jobs, the range of jobs, differences among occupations, requirements for work success, worker morale? Is it reasonable to expect that holding paid employment for several years in an occupation—whether in business or construction or wherever—will really provide the counselor with significant insights about the 30,000 different occupations in the American employment market among which persons might choose? Does such a requirement assume that students or clients will or should view the counselor's earlier work experience in the same way he or she does?

Professional counselors would similarly respond to the second recommendation cited. While persons with rich backgrounds of experience in business, labor, and industry might be good candidates for training as vocational or career guidance practitioners, just knowing a great deal about some segment of the labor market is, in itself, insufficient to be effective in work focused guidance. The latter also requires an understanding of human development and decision making, personal appraisal, and values clarification as well as other behaviors important to helping persons choose.

Professional counselors might relate to the issue of paraprofessionals in two ways. First, they would likely say we have been asking for such assistance for some time from legislators and educational administrators. They are reluctant to provide such support and if they do, it is at the cost of a sufficient number of professional counselors. Second, they would likely say that while paraprofessionals have a contribution to make to vocational guidance, they cannot do it alone nor can clients be dissected into vocational concerns which paraprofessionals can address, and other concerns which professional counselors need to address.

Professional counselors would likely suggest that they have been trying to improve their services to minority and disadvantaged populations, but much of their success depends upon improved responses to these groups from educators, including vocational educators, employers, and society at large. Thus, they might well say that counseling such constituencies for choice makes no sense if actual opportunities are denied to them, or if educational institutions or employers are unwilling to make changes accommodating the characteristics of these persons.

Professional counselors might likely concur that job placement and follow-up are appropriate parts of counseling services, but they would further indicate that unless schools are willing to expand counseling staffs or add a network of paraprofessionals it is impossible, given current counselor-student ratios, to accomplish these goals too. There are, of course, exceptions to this position and, indeed, there are instances where school counselors have incorporated these services into their ongoing efforts.

Professional counselors would also likely concur that career development programs be considered a major component in career education, both in legislation and in operating systems. However, they would further contend that career development is not synonymous with entry into vocational education or with occupational choice but embraces a broader set of concerns focused on self-awareness, effectiveness in decision making, etc.

This analysis of current views of work focused guidance as held by vocational educators and by counselors is probably a caricature of reality. Nevertheless, it suggests a state of creative tension in which there is some validity to each position but a lack of an empirical base on which to make judgments. This may sound a bit bizarre in the face of the countless role and function studies of counselors which have occurred through the years.

In general, however, these role and function studies have been compilations of opinion about what counselors should or should not do rather than the results of the tested effects of counselors of one type or another performing a range of functions related to some set of criteria pertinent to work focused guidance. During the past decade at least three major statements of required counselor competencies in career development, career guidance, or career education have been promulgated by the American Vocational Association and the National Vocational Guidance Association jointly, by the American Personnel and Guidance Association, and by the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision. While there are commonalities as well as differences among these counselor competency statements, the actual effects upon "youth in transition" of such forms of "work focused guidance" as these statements jointly or independently advocate have not been tested. We continue to extrapolate a counselor role from various types of prejudices rather than to examine the comparative effects of counselors trained in particular ways. In addition, we have not systematically examined such matters as the relation of a counselor's socioeconomic background to his or her knowledge of career or occupations, to attitudes toward decision making and exploratory behavior, to counseling emphases favoring academic versus work oriented students; the effects of counselor preparation in nonschool settings—e.g., industrial internships, different amounts or types of paid employment, intern experiences in community and government agencies—upon specific counselor behavior; or, the counselor's personal definition of work as a predictor of the functions counselors will implement or the ways client problems will be viewed.

### The Meaning of Work in Relation to the Guidance Process

Each of the three major issues just posed is related to the fourth, the meaning of work in relation to either the content or the description of the guidance process involved. Depending upon how

you define the term work, "work focused guidance" may be synonymous with what has historically been known as occupational or vocational guidance or what more recently has come to be known as career guidance. In the first two instances, the unit of concern has been immediate job or occupational choice in which the methodology employed emphasizes the matching of available forms of work activity with a person's predicted performance. In career guidance, however, the emphasis tends to be on projecting intermediate and future choices from the possibilities inherent in immediate choice, in an attempt to view educational options, occupational alternatives, and lifestyle preferences as interactive means of being goal-directed and purposeful, in one's approach to choice. The emphasis here is not only on one's performance but also on one's psychology as well.

In a sense, if you define work as labor, simply earning a living, fundamentally separate from the purposes of the worker, you get one kind of guidance emphasis. In this view you are likely to get a sorting process, aimed at matching person and job with maximum efficiency. The primary criterion in such a situation is likely to be how well the particular individual meets the need of the labor market. The major question is: How competent is the person now or how competent can he or she become, in terms of the skills sought by the various segments of the occupational structure?

The alternative view is to define work as a medium for finding purpose in life, for exercising judgment, for exhibiting style and craft in one's behavior, for becoming personally competent to achieve one's goals and preferences within the possibility structure of work.

While in reality, these two views of work may blend or converge, the accent you place on one or the other has a great deal to do with how you staff and organize guidance processes. Do you, for example, see the vocationalization of youth as exploiting them in the service of corporate industrial needs or as a way of freeing them to make a maximally effective accommodation within the reality that exists through the choice-making in which they can engage? Being simplistic, you may in the first instance, invest your resources in helping youth make the best match between their observable performance characteristics and the immediate job choices available; downplay the possibilities of change in either the individual or the environment; treat occupational, educational, and personal choices as independent; and place your guidance intervention at a point of institutional discontinuity (e.g., school leaving, occupational dislocation). These have been the prime elements of trait and factor approaches to vocational guidance since the turn of the twentieth century.

The other view, now espoused in the term "career guidance," looks at work goals as interrelated with life goals. Thus, choices of education and occupation are parts of a broader and lifelong pattern of interacting choice making up a career, and a lifestyle. In this perspective, career guidance includes consideration of leisure activities, distant as well as immediate or intermediate choices, personal values, the kinds of personal themes one's choices should serve, and the development of decision making skills. In such a view, guidance is seen as a process, not an event, in which a person is educated to choose, to be a personal activist, to be aggressive in seeking out opportunities rather than simply being reactive to whatever is available.

Career guidance, unlike earlier forms of vocational guidance, is seen as a program, not as a service. It has implications for all youth, not just specific youth. It is designed to facilitate certain types of personal behavior which I have described elsewhere as survival skills (Herr, 1975):

1. A knowledge of one's strengths and weaknesses, preferences and values, and the skill to relate these to the educational and occupational options available—the ability to make a realistic self-estimate.

2. An ability to use existing exploratory resources—educational opportunities, part-time work books, audio-visual resources—realistically to test personal characteristics and choices.

3. A knowledge of educational, occupational, and social lifestyle options and the skill to determine the interactions among them.

4. An ability to choose—that is, to understand and apply the decision making process purposefully and rationally.

5. Skills in interpersonal relationships—the ability to work cooperatively with others, to understand worker-supervisor relations, and to adopt to different people and conditions.

6. Employability and job-seeking skills—an understanding of applications and interviewing behavior.

7. An understanding of personal roles as an employee, a customer, a client, and an entrepreneur.

8. An understanding of the interdependence of the educational and occupational structure, the pathways between them, and the relationship of subject matter to its application in professional and technical vocational settings.

9. A knowledge of how to organize one's time and energy to get work done, to set priorities, and to plan.

10. An ability to see oneself as someone, as a person of worth and dignity, as a basis for seeing oneself as somet'.ing.

11. A set of occupation task specific skills.

There are many R&D implications here. For example, does the acquisition of these survival skills make any real difference in gaining access to employment, in adjusting to it, or in how work is viewed by the participant? What other skills also qualify as survival skills in the terms used here? What implications do such skills have for use as organizing themes in cooperative education or in other types of work experience? Do all youth profit from the possession of such skills or are they applicable only to some youth? Are these culture-bound or class-bound? How do youth differ in their natural acquisition of such skills and what are the predictors of such variability? Since some of the skills identified are quite basic to attitude predispositions and value sets, how susceptible to modification are they during the period of youth? Must a career guidance program begin in early childhood to be effective in yielding the behavior sought? To what degree does a survival skills agenda find acceptance among vocational educators? How should guidance personnel be trained in relation to developmental versus matching approaches to work focused guidance?

It is no secret that federal legislation is ambivalent about whether it supports a career guidance (developmental) or a vocational guidance (matching and information) emphasis as we have described them. Indeed, in the three major titles of the Education Amendments of 1976, PL 94-482, each of these approaches is accented differently in relation to higher education and adult populations (Title I), vocational education (Title II), or a major general application of guidance and counseling (Title III). This may have occurred because PL 94-482 is really a blend of

previously separate legislation in which "work focused guidance" was treated differently, or because there is no specific coordination of guidance and counseling at the federal level, or because federal legislators believe that guidance approaches should be tailored to the characteristics and needs of different populations or sub-groups. While I personally believe that a "systematic eclecticism" of "work focused guidance" makes sense, I am inclined to believe that the diversity of approaches to guidance within one piece of legislation have to do with the first two rather than the third reason I cited.

A similar but less dramatic ambivalence about approaches to "work focused guidance" is also found in the Youth Employment and Demonstration Projects Act of 1977 and in CETA. Here the legislation talks about broad counseling and training activities with somewhat less prescriptiveness than is found in PL 94-482. Indeed, while running the risk of overlaying existing services for youth with another layer of services outside of education or the current state employment services, the opportunity to test many of the ideas previously identified in this paper is quite evident. For example, the purposes of Titles I and II of YEDPA are to attach structural or seasonal unemployment problems of youth. To the degree that the approaches employed are effective, the findings will be quite useful in helping to clarify two of the four types of unemployment and the approaches to them which I mentioned early in this paper. In addition, Title II specifically mandates an experimental approach to the establishment of programs designed to affect youth unemployment and to test their comparative advantages after one year. While the time restraints may be unrealistic, the avowed purpose to evaluate various approaches has got to be applauded.

The information available so far indicates that the approaches to counseling being taken in support of YEDPA vary across the country. For example, in Portage, Ohio, economically disadvantaged youth participants are involved in job teams which are then assigned to community projects such as building a park or renovating a public building. Full-time counselors serve on each team and work with the participants in every project. This allows them to provide counseling when they deal with problems as they arise. The Lane County, Oregon, employment and training programs emphasize the development of short- and long-term goals by each youth in accordance with his or her interests developed in collaboration with assigned counselors. A plan of activities for each youth may include work experience, classroom training, basic skills remediation, and on-the-job training. Such an approach seems to me to be using work as behavioral modification as it was discussed earlier. In Jefferson/Franklin counties, Missouri, the youth participants are provided an orientation to CETA and an assessment of their interests, abilities, and goals. As a function of this analysis, participants are placed in a work experience consistent with their choices. Remedial education and tutoring is provided to these youngsters as necessary. As part of the program, seminars on job search and interview techniques as well as resume/application preparation are conducted (National Association of Counties Research Foundation, 1977).

The examples of YEDPA or CETA projects cited in this paper tend to blend matching and developmental approaches to guidance. By and large, these guidance emphases are integrated aspects of a total program, and they are linked directly to the work experience or occupation task specific skill development in which participants are engaged.

R&D implications abound. For example, is it possible to integrate such approaches to "work focused" guidance within the educational setting, perhaps using vocational education as the medium? Do participants receiving such guidance augmentation to their occupation task skill development compete more effectively in the labor market or adjust to work more effectively than persons receiving occupational skill development but not guidance? Are matching or developmental or an aggregate of these approaches to guidance more effective in helping youth gain

employment, or career maturity or work satisfaction? Are the career development needs of out-of-school youth, school dropouts, and in-school youth basically the same? If not, how do they differ? What are the predictors of such difference?

Perhaps an overriding R&D issue which follows from the YEDPA or CETA experience is how to identify and implement the relative roles of the educational authorities, the community employment and placement services, and the business-industry-labor sector. How is a mutual fee.ing of responsibilitiy for the transition of youth from school to work achieved? How do we avoid the attitude of expecting too much too quickly and thus abandoning a potentially effective process prematurely?

## Youth in Transition

Let me turn more directly to youth in transition, the object of work focused guidance in the title. In a real sense, all youth are in transition. Until recently, however, such discussions were focused only upon those youth engaged in movement from school (the secondary school) to work. Typically, those youths who left the secondary school to enter marriage or higher education were not considered part of this category. Reubens (1977, p. 4) has suggested that since World War II, the transition from school to work has emerged as "an independent area for study and action, distinct from efforts to reform education or youth employment." She cites several reasons for this phenomenon.

> First, school is seen as an easier environment for youth and as profoundedly different from employment. Second, the transition between school and work is judged to be too swift and abrupt. Third, the initial transition experience is considered crucial and is said to exert a decisive influence on a young person's whole occupational future.

Viewed in such terms, the transition from school to work can be seen as an extension of the "storm and stress" by which adolescence is characterized by many observers. Youth in the transition from school to work are expected to be in a state of discontinuity. As a result of experiencing a variety of internal and external stresses and anxieties associated with the development of a new norm system—that of adults—the uncertainty related to finding a job, particularly a congenial one, the frustration experienced in applying learning from school to the demands of the work place, and much of the speculation about the transition from school to work have been pessimistic and negative.

Over the past decade or so, however, studies of how youth view the transition to work does not bear out the trepidation and anxiety theorized. Indeed, many studies conducted in this country and elsewhere suggest that most youths look forward to leaving school and entering work. The reasons for this preference for work include increased freedom and independence, having one's own spending money, less discipline, being treated as an adult, freedom from teachers, performing a greater variety of tasks at work, action instead of talk, an opportunity to meet different kinds of people, and doing things within one's capacities instead of struggling unsuccessfully with academic subjects (Reubens, 1977, pp. 5 and 6). (It is tempting to focus here on how these positive expectations or realities of work for youth could be incorporated into the climate and procedures of schooling to make that environment more congenial. Although that's an interesting R&D issue, I will try to stay with the present point.)

The basic point of these studies seems to be that high youth unemployment is not a function of the preferences of young people but a structural characteristic of social, occupational, and

economic factors largely beyond their control. Does this mean that work focused guidance has no validity for youth in transition? I don't think so. National unemployment rates are important reference points, but they obscure three other facts. One is that despite high unemployment rates overall, most youths who wish to be are, in fact, employed. The second is that national unemployment rates obscure a great deal of internal movement within the labor force due to death, retirement, and job shifts which do create continuing points of entry to the occupational structure for youth. A third is that national unemployment rates vary dramatically in their applicability to different regions of the nation. Youth do not compete for jobs nationally; they compete locally. And, there is a great variance in the degree to which local unemployment rates fluctuate.

Given these observations about the transition period as a whole, there seems currently to be a general shifting of perspective in the industrialized countries about what the scope of transition services—orientation and information, guidance and counseling, initial job placement, induction to work, follow-up—should emphasize. One assumption is that "work focused guidance" related to the school to work transition should be a developmental extension of the notion of career guidance which I earlier discussed. In this sense, placement is seen as a process, not as an event. In other words, there are many ways to prepare youths for the transition to work which can be dealt with prior to the specific point of the transition. Helping youths to focus on their learning and performance capabilities, to gain decision making capacity, to formulate an awareness of their options, and how to prepare for them and gain access to them are examples of the skills which are highly related to making youth competent to cope with the transition process and readily integrated with the educational process. There are also skills quite specific to the transition process which can be developmentally strengthened. These include job search and job interview behaviors, worker-supervisory relationships, human relations, or communications at work. These clusters of skills are not different from the other career guidance behaviors I have suggested in the earlier notion of survival skills. They simply have utility in different circumstances.

Beyond these general notions of how to build individual strengths appropriate to the types of decision points or other demands upon youth, there is also the important notion of attending quite directly to the behavioral deficits or performance inadequacies of the minority of youth whose transition to work is being demonstrably impaired. In these instances, remedial education, basic literacy development, and other targeted assistance are being provided to them. Where their unemployment is a function not of their own inadequacy but of socioeconomic conditions, programs such as the youth conservation programs, public service employment, and other similar responses are being placed into the breech. The problem in this latter area, however, is not simply finding a place for new entrants in the labor market but finding a place in the primary labor market (what the federal government calls career-related work[2]) rather than the secondary labor market. The distinction here is that it is the primary market which offers the potential for job mobility, job security, income, and on-the-job training, which is likely to fulfill the aspirations and take advantage of the skill levels available in the youth population. The secondary labor market, because of its temporary and shifting character, is less likely to do so.

This view of responses to youth in transition is not to be optimistic about the problems involved. Since youth values, educational emphases, and conditions of work are each in flux simultaneously, the bridges between school and work tend to be often poorly designed and shaky. Among the major issues which need to be anticipated and probed for their implications for transition services include:

---

[2] Career-related work is that type of work that offers advancement potential and access to skill development opportunities. This type of work is more likely to be skilled than unskilled, and it pays better than non-career-related work (Stein, 1977).

1. Are the worlds of education and work really fixed and separate in their expectations and treatment of youth? If so, are there modifications in either which would facilitate the transition from school to work?

2. Which agencies independently or collectively offer the most effective settings for helping youth gain transition skills?

3. How can educational experiences place greater emphasis on the development needs of youth anticipating transition without elongating the education process itself?

4. Is it realistic to expect secondary schools to impart occupational skills to all students, or should its emphasis be placed on bringing youth to a point of trainability by other sectors of the society? What are the personal, social, and intellectual qualities that comprise trainability?

5. What are the implications for transition processes of the growing similarity of male and female career patterns?

6. How can studies of individual development, economic and social problems, institutional responsibility, and public programs be combined to develop a theory of transition?

7. What agency should take the responsibility for the induction and follow-through of youth into work?

Beyond the R&D implications that these trends hold, let me conclude by being a bit more specific about the status of theory pertinent to youth in transition. Perhaps of overriding importance is the fact that if there are problems for youth in the transition from school to work, the problems are not distributed equally across all youth. Indeed, the major transition problems are experienced by certain groups of disadvantaged youth, not youth in general. Unfortunately, when we turn to career development theory for help in understanding such populations, we find little assistance. Most of the accepted principles of career development theory have come from studies of relatively small samples of middle class white males. There is as yet no comprehensive perspective on the career development of women, nor is there much systematic information pertinent to the career development of minority group members whether classified racially, ethnically, or religiously. Relatively little attention has been given to the career development of the rural poor as compared with the urban poor. Systematic study of the effects of congenital versus later physical handicaps upon career development is yet to be undertaken. Virtually no attention has been given to the career development of gay persons—the employment limitations they face, or the career guidance strategies appropriate to them (Herr and Cramer, in press).

Relatively little is known about the effects of economic or cultural change upon career behavior. While most career development theorists have addressed the importance of situational variables to career development, they have done so in abstract terms rather than researching the effects of such conditions upon personal choice making and commitments. It is clear that the family history, the community in which one is reared, and the socioeconomic status of the person all have an effect on career development. The question is, how much of an effect is there, when does it occur, under what conditions, and for whom? We continue to treat persons described by a group characteristic—racial, ethnic, religious, age, sex—as though they are a part of a homogeneous group. We often do not take into account the extent of variance which operates in any group and examine its implication for given individuals. Such is the case among youth in

transition. This group is composed of subpopulations who vary in their ability to master the movement from school to work. The reasons and the responses are likely to be heterogeneous. As such, the needs for research and development are critical and complex.

## Summary

This paper has attempted to consider the topic "work focused guidance for youth in transition" from three broad perspectives: the notions that youth transition problems are not indigenous to the United States but are international in scope, an attempt to examine the meaning of work focused guidance, and, finally, a brief look at youth in transition.

## References


Drucker, P. *Technology, Management and Society.* New York: Harper and Row, 1970.

Grubb, W. A. and Lazerson, M. Rally 'Round the Workplace: Continuities and Fallacies in Career Education. *Harvard Educational Review*, November 1975, 4, 451-474.

Herr, E. L. *Statement on the Career Guidance and Counseling Act of 1975.* The U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Education and Labor, Subcommittee on Elementary, Secondary and Vocational Education. Washington, D.C., April 10, 1975.

Herr, E. L. and Cramer, S. H. *Career Guidance Through the Life Span: Toward Systematic Approaches.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin (In Press).

International Labor Office. Why It's Hard to Cut Youth Unemployment. *ILO Information,* 1977, 5, 1, 1 (a).

International Labor Office. *The ILO and the World of Work*, Geneva, Switzerland: The Office, 1977 (b).

Kroll, A. M. Career Education's Impact on Employability and Unemployment: Expectations and Realities. *Vocational Guidance Quarterly*, March 1976, 24 (3), 209-218.

Michanek, E. *The World Development Plan.* Stockholm, Sweden: The Dag Hammerskjold Foundation, 1971.

National Association of Counties Research Foundation. *County Manpower Report*, August 1977, 6 (5), 8-10.

O'Toole, J. *The Reserve Army of the Unemployed.* Monographs on Career Education. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1975.

Reubens, G. C. *Bridges to Work: International Comparisons of Transition Services.* Montclair, New Jersey: Allenheld Osmun, 1977.

Sessions, J. A. Misdirecting Career Education: A Union View. *Vocational Guidance Quarterly*, June 1975, 23 (4), 315-316.

Stern, B. E. *Toward a Federal Policy on Education and Work.* Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, March 1977.

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Question: What can we learn from work related guidance systems in other industrialized nations?

I believe we can learn a great deal from other industrialized societies with regard to the specific recognition of diversity in the information needs and services within youth populations. In many ways, the European nations have accepted the implications of having a pluralistic society and, therefore, have accepted different cultural traditions and aspirations associated with work more fully than we have. I think this is probably the result of the predominance of psychology as the main disciplinary lens through which career development is viewed in the United States, whereas in Europe, sociological perspectives on career development are much more influential.

Question: Do we need to retool ourselves as to different interests and changes in society, such as more women looking for jobs and working with students who want jobs but aren't mobile enough to want to move to a job?

Yes, we do. The growing number and proportion of women seeking entrance to the labor force is a major factor in the persistance of the national unemployment rate. By this, I mean that the current unemployment rate in this country tends to obscure the growing number of people in our population who are actually in the labor force. Beyond that fact, however, it obscures the changing composition of age cohorts, sex ratios, and minority backgrounds of persons seeking employment, moving in and out of the labor market, or changing positions within the occupational structure. On one hand, these shifts need to be addressed in the responses made by education and other transition services. On the other hand, it is also necessary to look at the implications of these for child rearing, family structure, work values, family discretionary income and other matters which have implications for planning for the future whether in the public or private sectors.

As far as working with students who want jobs but aren't mobile enough to move to a job is concerned, there are a number of responses possible. It obviously depends on how far away the available jobs are that you are talking about. In many of the cases we could talk about, the problem is one of a lack of public transportation to and from work, not an absolute lack of mobility as regards commuting to a job. On the other hand, however, the assumption that people should move to where jobs are rather than developing employment opportunities where people want to remain is, I think, another variation of what I was saying in question one. We have not taken into account in many of our job development schemes that people do have family and ethnic ties where they are. Many people value maintaining these more than they value occupational opportunities elsewhere and the psychological dislocations that fracturing one's family social relationships entails. Rather than acting as though these are not important inhibitors of mobility, we need to find ways of spurring small business and industry at neighborhood levels, decentralizing some of our large industrial organizations, encouraging and supporting new forms of entrepreneurial behavior in the service and goods-producing sections, improving public transportation, etc.

Question: What are the greatest inhibitors to setting up experiential guidance counseling systems?

The greatest inhibitors are: the reluctance and lack of experience we have in leaving the confines of the school and moving systematically into the community to arrange specific types of guidance experiences for young people; the suspicion that when school counselors or others leave their office and go into the community to meet with representatives of business and industry, they are somehow doing something not quite appropriate; the lack of widespread information and acceptance of school-community collaboration; the lack in educational administrator or teacher training of instruction or experiences in actually working with elements of the community in other than parent-child relationships; and the lack of understanding among many educators of the extent to which education occurs outside of the formal and conventional processes of schooling.

Question: Do you see YEDPA as a field test for a National Youth Service Act? Are resources available to set up such an art?

YEDPA could be a field test for a National Youth Service Act. I do not know whether resources are available to support such an act, but I suspect they are if we choose to go in that direction. The problem from my perspective is how to use YEDPA to help young people enter the primary labor market, or career-related work as the Department of Labor calls it, rather than only the secondary labor market. The latter is a temporary and important response to unemployment but it cannot be a long-term solution. The other dimension is how do we fully exploit the guidance opportunities inherent in YEDPA and other work experiences so that we do not settle for less from these experiences than is actually there for young people to get.

Question: Do we need to devote further study to career development of jobs in "extralegal fields," i.e., pimps, prostitutes, etc.

It is clear that there are a lot of such populations about whose career development we know less than we should. We know less than we should about the career development of the physically handicapped, for example, or gays or lower socioeconomic class males or persons of different ethnic backgrounds. It would also be useful, I would think, to know why persons enter and persist in extralegal occupations.

Question: What promising approaches do you see for reaching various subpopulations?

I think we have to start by making sure that we include representatives of the subpopulations we want to reach in our planning. They know the avenues and the mechanisms appropriate to the traditions and conventions most likely to be useful. Beyond this, however, there are lots of examples that can be pushed, I think. Some of them might include community seminars, the use of paraprofessionals directly with work groups on site, placing educational or job-brokering shops, or support groups in local neighborhoods.

Question: Do you know of any preferences expressed by spec al needs groups, in regard to approaches to counseling and guidance systems?

There are preferences expressed by special needs groups in studies which have appeared in the professional literature. Beyond this, however, my experience is that it is best to try to secure the position statements on such matters from national organizations which represent such groups. I think, for example, of such organizations as the National Urban Coalition or ASPIRA or NOW or the native American tribal federations.